

Monthly eMagazine of Vedanta Ashram & Mission

Vedanta Sandesh



Happy 2023

Year 28

Jan 2023

Issue 7

Cover Page



The cover page of the Jan 2023 issue of Vedanta Sandesh is a beautiful, very striking and a very commonly found bird - the White-throated Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*). This bird is a resident bird in its region and is found all over the country.

The White-throated Kingfisher or the White-breasted Kingfisher, is basically a tree kingfisher, and can even be found well away from water. WTK is a large kingfisher and the adult has a bright blue rather turquoise back, wings and tail. Its head, shoulders, flanks and lower belly are chestnut, and the throat and breast are white. The large bill and legs are bright red. Sexes are similar. The nest is a tunnel 2-3 feet deep in an earth bank which it digs with its long & powerful beak.

This beautiful photo has been clicked by Swamini Amitanandaji at the nearby Sirpur Lake area of Indore in Nov 22. Do check around for this beautiful bird in your locality. Seeing the beauty of creation is the best way to sing the glories of God.

Om Namah Shivaya.



Vedanta Sandesh

Jan 2023



1.	Shloka	7
2.	Message of P. Gururji	8
3.	Drig Drishya Viveka	16
4.	Letter	26
5.	Gita Reflections	34
6.	The Art of Man Making	42
7.	Jivanmukta	54
8.	Story Section	60
9.	Mission / Ashram News	66
10.	Forthcoming Progs	90
11.	Internet News	91
12.	Links	94



Editor

Swamini Samatananda Saraswati



Vedanta Sandesh

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<http://www.vmission.org.in> / vashram.in@gmail.com





स्वात्मतत्त्वानुसन्धानं
भक्तिरित्यपरे जगुः।
उक्तसाधन सम्पन्नः
तत्त्वजिज्ञासुरात्मनः।।

Some say that 'bhakti' means a constant enquiry into the Truth of one's own Self. One who has this qualifications alone is the seeker of the truth of Self.

Vivekachoodamani - 33





Message from Poojya Guruji



AVATARA RAHASYA

In his introduction to Bhagwad Gita, Bhagwan Sri Adi Shankaracharya writes a beautiful and enlightening section on the principle of Avatara. Let us briefly discuss that section.

Following Dharma requires wisdom :

As we know dharma is a life of God-centricity. We are aware of the existence of God, feel blessed by the umpteen bless-





Avatara Rahasya

ings being showered on us, so such people voluntarily live a life out of love and respect unto God. This obviously requires alertness & wisdom, and the moment alertness and wisdom fades then we start living for ourselves with all the insecurities and lack and try to manage our lives with all the burden on our shoulders. This is what an ego-centric life is all about. When this happens then apart from all the travails of an ego-centric life, stress, bad relationships and ill-health, the biggest tragedy is the decline in subtle capacities of our intellect. With this the ball keeps rolling down and instead of living a life of dharma, such people start living a life of adharma. In such a scenario every person is all for him/her self



“With ego-centric life there is stress, bad relationships, ill-health, and the worst of all the decline in subtle capacities of our intellect.**”**



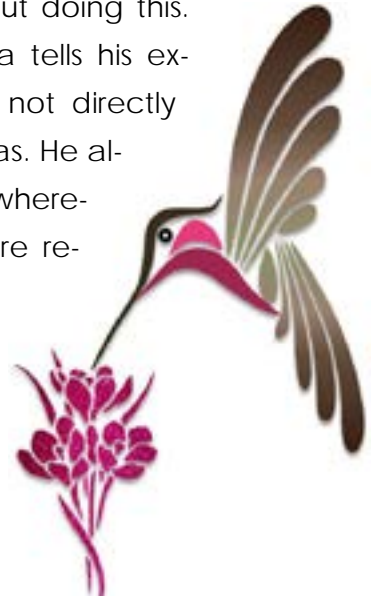


Avatara Rahasya

and a selfish society is created wherein all the three objectives of Dharma get compromised - Abhyudaya, Nishshreyas and well-being of the world at large. That is the time some divine intervention is required.

Objective of Avatara :

Objective of an Avatara are best told by the famous shloka of Gita - that whenever there is decline of Dharma and resurgence of Adharma, God descends to set things right. Now, the obvious question is as to how does he go about doing this. In this Bhashya the Acharya tells his exact approach. God need not directly go around handling all asuras. He already has a system in place wherein there are people who are responsible for bringing about right wisdom in all. These





Avatara Rahasya

are our teachers and even saints. When the decadence of adharma spreads then even this segment becomes corrupted. So this is the main target of an Avatara. Once the people responsible for giving proper knowledge are refreshed and recharged then the system once again shall start moving in the right direction. So respecting his own order of Varna-Ashram Dharma, he focusses on those who are directly responsible to set right the place of Dharma.



“When the decadence of adharma spreads then even many teachers get deluded.”

Acharya says that the priority of Avatara is basically the teachers community, called Brahmins in our system. He says Bhaumasya Brahmanah Brahmanatva Rakshanartham - meaning those people





Avatara Rahasya

who are an embodiment of the knowledge of Dharma & God, I basically refresh the right knowledge in them. For this even the Kings may be influenced, but as Kings are ruled as per the direction of their Gurus etc, so this Guru segment is his prime target. Once the teachers and Gurus are recharged then we can rest assured that the society will be benefitted & blessed. So this is something very interesting and important in this Introductory Bhashya.

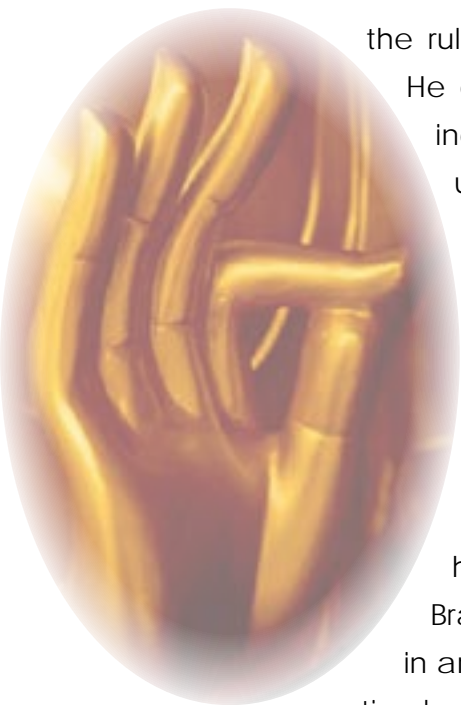
A Man of Knowledge is not Avatara :

Avatara is born with all the knowledge and glories and he knows it too. He knows the transcendental and also the immanent truth, he is a master of all the powers & prakriti. He is the master of all, yet lives in our midst as a human being following all





Avatara Rahasya



the rules of this realm of existence. He doesn't go around announcing his God-hood to anyone unless specifically required. Those who do so basically satiate their ego and are not worthy to be called even a saint. He just gets his work of establishing dharma done. The beauty is that while an Avatara is born enlightened he himself has given a special Brahma-Vidya in Vedas wherein any person can wake up to the timeless divinity within and be one with Ishwara. Such Brahma-Gyani's personally revel in the same fulfillment, yet are still not called Avatara, but just as Brahma-Gyani's.



“Those go around announcing their God-hood basically satiate their bloated ego and are not worthy to be called even a saint.**”**



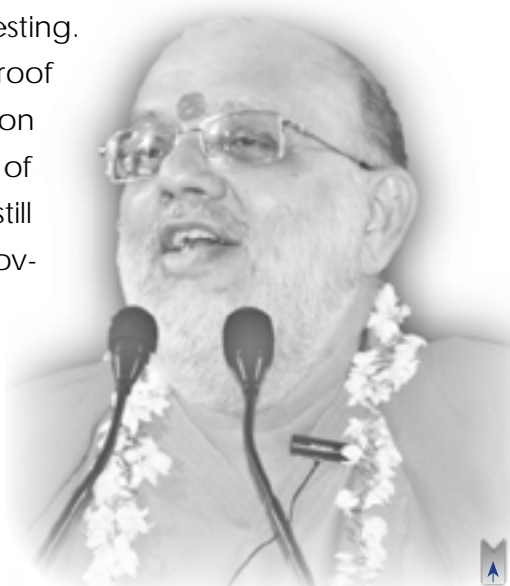


Avatara Rahasya

The Birth & Karma of an Avatara are Divine:

The Birth and Karma of an Avatara are all very unique and different. The uniqueness of their birth is that they take up a physical body even when there is nothing personal to achieve in this loka whatsoever, except the wish that his beautiful and blessed creation keeps running for the well-being of all in an order which is best for all. His Karma is also different. An embodiment of fulfillment, in the midst of a creation of his own making, where he alone has become everything, as per his sankalpa alone, yet acting lovingly, selflessly and holistically. Something very interesting.

An Avatara is basically a proof that any limited Jiva can don a physical body yet inspite of a perishable body he can still revel in Brahman and act lovingly and holistically.





DRIG DRISHYA VIVEKA

Swamini Samatananda

Shloka - 01

रूपं दृश्यं लोचनं दृक्
तद्दृश्यं दृक् तु मानसम् ।
दृश्याः धीवृत्तायः साक्षी
दृगेव न तु दृश्यते ॥

The form is perceived and the eye is it's perceiver. It (eye) is perceived and the mind is its perceiver. The mind with its modifications is perceived and the Witness (the Self) is verily the perceiver. But It (the Witness) is not perceived (by any other).





DRIG DRISHYA VIVEKA

 angati:

Drig Drishya Viveka is a journey of enquiring and discovering the reality of the Self. It is an enquiry and discrimination between the 'Seer and the Seen'. In every experience there is a 'Seer' and there is a dimension which is 'Seen'. In all such experiences who is the 'Seer' and what is the nature of the 'Seer'. What is the 'Seen' and what is the nature of the





Drig Drishya Viveka

'Seen'? So here we are going to enquire and discriminate between the 'Seer' (Drishta) and the 'Seen' (drishya). And through this enquiry the Acharya aims to help us discover the ultimate Seer. In this process of discrimination one must keep the following points in mind to ultimately come to discover the absolute Seer.



“The viveka of Seer-Seen takes us to the timeless truth.”

- 1-The Seer can never be the Seen.
- 2-The Seen can never be the Seer.
- 3-The Seer and the Seen cannot be one.
- 4-The absolute Seer cannot be changing. It is a changeless factor.

The first shloka is a sutra, a summarizing shloka or a capsule form of the entire





Drig Drishya Viveka

discussion ahead in the text. The Acharya very compassionately begins from where we stand today and then slowly guides us to the more subtle levels of our existence. Today I see myself as this body, the sense organs, the mind and intellect. All our interactions and experiences with the world are possible with these faculties alone. In that too, interactions and experiences at the level of our five sense organs and the objective world outside predominates all our experiences. Thus the Acharya begins our journey from the level of our sense organs. Let us see what the Master says:

**Roopam drishyam lochanam
drik:**

The Acharya as though creates an imaginary scene





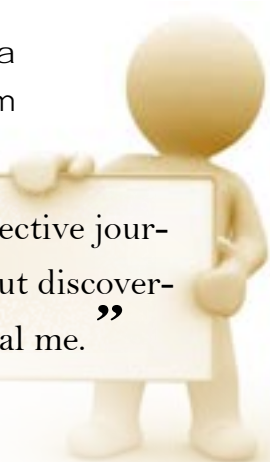
Drig Drishya Viveka

of a Guru and shishya and puts up a question- Whenever we look at any form then who is the Seer? As we

look into the answer to the implied question one must also understand that 'roopam' has engulfed in it all

other sense organs too. We have five sense organs namely the eyes, ears, tongue, skin and nose and these five sense organs have their respective five objects of perception such as form, sound, taste, touch and smell. With the five sense organs we are constantly interacting with the outside world.

“The subjective journey is all about discovering the real me.”



So, coming back to the question-who is the Seer of any form? The student will think and say-Well, naturally, the seer is the 'eyes'. It is the eyes which see the





Drig Drishya Viveka

beautiful form of the rising sun and the mountains. It is only when the eyes give importance to some form that the very existence of the form comes into being. No form has an independent existence. If the eyes do not look at something it will cease to exist. Secondly the eyes are not affected by the change in forms or visuals. The sun rises higher in the sky every second yet the eyes are unaffected by the change. In that case, can we say that the eyes are the absolute seer? There is no other 'Seer' beyond the sense organs?

Tad drishyam drik tu manasam:

The Acharya reveals that the eyes are not the absolute 'Seer', because the eyes or for that matter all other sense organs are able to see, hear, taste etc only when the mind is present behind





Drig Drishya Viveka

the respective sense organs to help illuminate the objects of perception. If in case the mind is unavailable the sense organs will not perceive anything. Sometimes it does happen if the mind is preoccupied in something I miss seeing a friend walking towards me. Secondly, the potentials of the sense organs are also subject to change. Our vision, our hearing etc. can be weakened or impaired as we grow older. In such a situation the mind which is the 'Seer' of the sense organs is unchanging. The eyes may lose vision but the mind stays ever young. So, again can we say that the Mind is the absolute 'Seer'?

Drishya dhi vrittayah saakshi:

The Acharya says-The mind is a faculty where there is, sankalpa and vikalpa, there are convictions, there is a flux of





Drig Drishya Viveka

thoughts, happiness and sorrow. These are all a flux which keep changing from time to time. We are not in the same frame of mind forever. So the question that is the Mind the ultimate and Real Seer? The answer is No! The Mind too is not the absolute Seer. There is a Seer beyond the Mind which illumines the Mind too. That is the 'Sakshi' the ultimate Seer. What is the nature of this Saakshi?

Drigeva na tu drishyate:

The Acharya thus says 'Drig eva'. This Saakshi alone is the absolute and ultimate Seer as there is no other Seer beyond it to illumine the Sakshi. The Saakshi enables all other faculties to illumine the world of names and forms, emotions, resolutions, convictions, knowledge and ignorance, thus they all are a relative 'Seer' at their own levels but the





Drig Drishya Viveka

absolute unchanging Drishta-Seer is the
Saakshi alone.

In this manner in this shloka the Achar-
ya gives us an outline of the nature of
discrimination in a capsulated form. This
sutra will be further discussed in details
as we dive deeper into the text.





Mail from Poojya Gururaj

Q: What is the main purpose & objective of Bhagwad Gita?





MAIL FORM POOJYA GURUJI



Your question is good and is also for well-being of so many others.

In short, Bhagwad Gita helps to establish the Sanatan Dharma once again. Sanatan Dharma is a unique way of living, lived by God himself and all the





Mail from Poojya Gururaj

wise people here. This special way of living is not only for the worldly well-being of all the people, but this Dharma blesses us holistically. It even helps us attain Self-Knowledge and also simultaneously assures the well-being of all, thus protecting the world and assuring its healthy continuity.



“Just as in a car we need to learn to drive forward and to stop, so also in life, we need to learn about Pravritti and Nivritti. These two are the subject-matter of Vedas. **”**

There are two components of Sanatan Dharma - one, the Pravrutti-lakshan Dharma, and the other - Nivrutti-lakshan Dharma. An intelligent use of both helps us to not only make the best of our lives but also prepares us for the





Mail from Poojya Guruji

liberating self-knowledge too, which is the 'main goal of life' of everyone. Gita talks about both, sometime about Karma and sometime about knowledge. It has been confusing to many and so we have so many commentaries telling us about the message of Gita in so different ways. It appears that depending upon the fancies of some people themselves they have been interpreting Gita accordingly. Some say Gita is talking about dynamic, selfless Karma, some say it inspires us to be a devotee of God and live, and so on.

However, one should realize that while Gita is certainly talking of all of this yet there is something more. The total

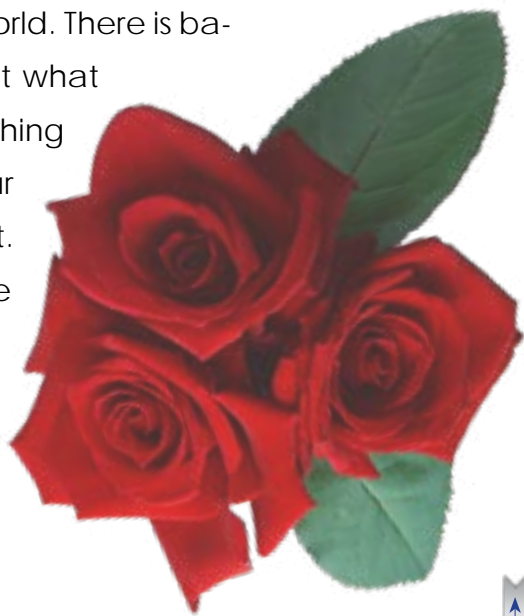




Mail from Poojya Guruji

picture is something more and so very different.

The way to discern the real objective of Bhagwad Gita is to first bring to our mind the ultimate need of man, that which shall truly & permanently redeem us from all the pangs & problems of transmigration. So what is the real problem and what is its solution. Obviously the real problem is basically ignorance of Self, God, the timeless truth and the right way to live in this world. There is basically an aviveka about what is real and unreal. Everything will be set right if our knowledge is set right. So if Gita is the essence & cream of Vedas, and





Mail from Poojya Guruji

helps us to get over all our problems, then definitely the ultimate objective of Gita will be to handle that basic problem. However, the knowledge of Self aka God is extremely subtle, and we have to first prepare our minds for that knowledge. Gita tells us a very practical thing, that our day to day usual karma itself can be transformed into Yoga. Yoga is that which makes our mind quiet & pure. It basically prepares us for awakening into the ultimate truth. So instead of prescribing some occasional sadhanas, Bhagwan gives us a way to transform every karma into a sadhana. Now we don't have to leave our work-fields. The so called right action is an art



“Gita tells us that our day to day karmas can be transformed into Yoga.”





Mail from Poojya Gururaj

of living holistically and also with a particular attitude.

That which creates an impediment in our minds for invoking necessary intelligence are basically some negative attitudes & priorities, so it is these attitudes and priorities which need to be corrected. They can very well be corrected even in our day to day karmas also and

any special karma are not basically required. So that's

the plan of action. First learn to act properly

& positively, convert your karma

into Karma Yoga

which will





Mail from Poojya Guruji

start the process of purification of mind and invocation of intelligence. Thereafter once this is satisfactorily attained, one has to change priorities and focus not on karma but knowledge & deeper understanding of life and self. This alone will help us get the right redeeming knowledge. This in short is the message and objective of Bhagwad Gita.

Love & om

Swami Atmananda





Gita Reflections

Gita Ch. 12 Sloka 6

Swamini Samatananda





Gita Reflections

अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥

(*Gita Ch. 12 / Shloka 6*)

Some meditate upon me with a
belief that - I alone am.

(Gita Ch 12 / Shloka 6)





GITA REFLECTIONS



angati:

In Chapter Twelve- of 'Bhakti Yoga' Bhagwan Sri Krishna unfolds the path to unconditional devotion. Answering Arjuna's question as to which devotion is more superior, devotion to the manifested form (saakaar bhakti) or devotion towards the unmanifest (nirakaar bhakti) Bhagwan reveals a sequential path of first invoking and practising devotion





Gita Reflections

to the manifested form of Ishvara and then in the process getting ready for upasana of the avyakta or niraakaar. Although one must understand that the nature of vyakt upasana and the nature of avyakt upasana are poles apart. Yet the Lord, very compassionately paves a clear, smooth and steady path to slowly evolve from the level of a faithful devotee to a yogi surrendering all his actions at the feet of the Lord, and then painting an inspiring picture of a man of wisdom for whom devotion has become as natural as swimming is to a fish.



“U pasana of the vyakta prepares us for the upasana of the avyakta.”

**Ananyenaivvyogena maam dhyaayan-
ta upaasate:**

In the 11th shloka of the chapter Bhag-





Gita Reflections



wan reveals a very significant quality of an aspiring devotee. This quality is about being able to see one's own self as ever connected to Ishvara. It is a vision of seeing that Ishvara is not separate from me-na anyah... This is an extremely valuable attribute of a devotee which forms the basis of a holistic life wherein the devotee walks the path of life holding the hands of Bhagwan. He lives a life which is free from stress and worry, which is fearless, full of enthusiasm, and wherein the devotee is assured of fulfillment of all his mental resolutions. Further to this the Lord also assures such a devotee of even being liberated from the endless cycle of birth and death.

The quality of being ever connected to Ishvara, never seeing the Self as sep-





Gita Reflections

erate from Ishvara, reflects the classic example of a small child walking the market area by holding the hand of his mother or father. Merely by holding the hand the child is assured of not only being secure at all times but also the fact that the parent will take care of all his needs too.



“Those who think that “I am a self-made man” are obviously oblivious & ignorant of the infinite blessings being showered on us every moment. .”

It is interesting to understand that when we walk bearing the burden of a strong sense of doership-with an attitude that I alone am the doer, then I am invariably bearing the load of everything all alone. The very attitude-that it is due to my efforts alone that I have achieved so much in life, ‘I am a self-made Man’





Gita Reflections

is an attitude that will surely lead to a burdened life full of stress, anxiety, and arrogance. In success one will inflate with a sense of ego and arrogance and also an insecurity of the possibility of losing all that has been achieved. In case of failures it will lead to a sense of breakdown, inferiority complex and never ending stress. On the other hand being a devotee every moment of living life, of performing actions is filled with the spirit of being charged with an attitude of being an instrument in the hands of Ishvara, by being filled with a sense of gratitude at all times, being fear-

less, and free of all anxieties of success and failure.

Such devotees not only perform to the best of their ability but also accept all situations with grace be





Gita Reflections

it success or failure. Such is the divine beauty of staying ever connected to ishvara. Ishvara is not seperate from Me. Such people alone walk with a clear determination and are able to fulfill their own resolutions, their sankalpa. There are no distractions, no energy fritters, no anxiety, and no fear.

Bhagwan in this shloka inspires us to invoke this quality of a devotee, having which not only do we live a dynamic, feraless and stress free life here and now but Bhagwan also assures us of being liberated from the cycle of birth and death as we will slowly walk on this path of devotion to God and then acquire the knowledge of his true nature.





P.P. Gurudev
Swami Chinmayanandaji

- 58 -

The Art Of Man Making

Nature of the Lord





THE ART OF MAN MAKING

Is it not rather strange and unnatural for the Geeta to re-commend that man should learn to serve his fellowmen without ego and egocentric desires to enjoy the results of his actions? Is it not unnatural? All beings act from their selfishness and seek their desire-gratifications. Not to do so seems to contradict a natural instinct-the Creator's own intention and will.





The Art of Man Making

To answer such an obviously logical question, Krishna in the verses here discusses upon the Nature of the Lord of the Universe, the Spark of existence that is present in all of us as our very life. This glow of life manifesting in us is in Itself the Total Life expressing in all bosoms in all living creatures. Its playful presence allows our body, mind and intellect to borrow from It all their thrills to action. The blades of a fan and its armature, all by themselves, will not revolve: from the electric current they borrow their abilities to function. Here



“The spark of life manifesting in us is the life expressing in all bosoms.”

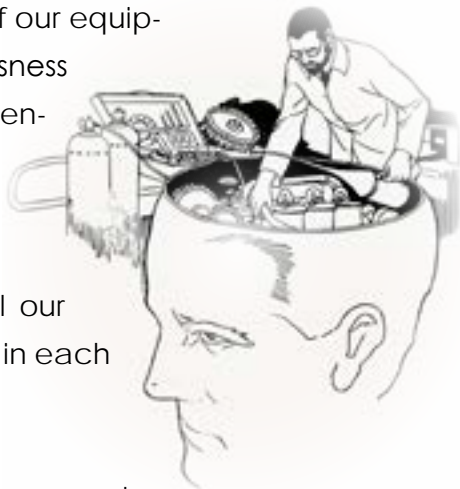
the current is the “Lord of the Fan”: similarly, the Self, the Atman- the Life-Spark- from which our equipments borrow their





The Art of Man Making

functions, must be the “Lord of our equipments”. The Infinite Consciousness that lends all activities to the entire cosmos is the Lord of the Universe—the Jagadeeshwara. The Supreme Jagadeeshwara, presiding over all our individual activities, is the Lord in each one of us.



The Geeta Acharya here reveals, Neither the sense of agency nor actions does the Lord create for the world. Nor does He bring about the union with the fruit of action. It is “Universal Ignorance” Nature that does it all. Just as the petrol in the car makes the car move; but where the car goes, its direction, its performance en route and its final destination are all ordered by the discretion of the driver, so too in the presence of the Self,





The Art of Man Making

the equipments of personality in every living creature get thrilled, and they work according to their own Nature- meaning the Vasanas that prompt them to act. The Lord of the Universe is not creating the ego-sense in us; nor does the Lord order our egocentric passions and desires, which set the particular direction for all our activities. In fact, then, what exactly



“*Is*hwara alone is, Jiva is like a ghost of an entity, imagining its own separate existence.”

does the mighty Life-Force do? Lord Krishna amplifies, The Omnipresent takes no note of anyone's merit or demerit. Knowledge is shrouded by ignorance, hence do beings get deluded. Taking again our earlier analogy, the petrol in the car takes no note of anyone's driving abilities-if the car is steadily on the road, the gas helps





The Art of Man Making

the car to ride safely: if the driver be drunk or sleepy, and so he turns the car wrongly off the kerb and down the embankment, the powers released by the gas will equally bless the car to run efficiently down the sides of the embankment into its chosen tragic disaster. The Self is in us: if our mind and intellect are awake and alert, life can be a pleasant ride - if we are drowsy and careless, life can efficiently ditch us in the wayside! Petrol is not responsible for our reaching our family or we reaching the nearest hospital.

The Life-Force, Self, is ever functioning in us. The Self, the Consciousness, is not involved, whatever be the way you order your life or you choose to employ its mighty powers. If the individual has unhealthy ideas, dangerous temperaments, wrong traits, foul motives, despicable attitudes these mal-





The Art of Man Making

adjustments in the individual's personality layers take him to his disaster. And why have we these false notions?

“Unveil knowledge within and live joyously, uninvolved in either the sense of agency (doership) nor vainly distracted by the desires to enjoy the results of actions (enjoyership).”

The Lord clearly declares, Knowledge is enveloped in ignorance (Vasanas) and hence beings get deluded. Right knowledge is ever with us. But our Vasanas delude us with spiritual “ignorance”, which is made up of the “non- apprehension” of Reality and our consequent “mis apprehension” of the same. Unveil knowledge within and live joyously, uninvolved in either the sense of agency (doership) nor





The Art of Man Making

vainly distracted by the desires to enjoy the results of actions (enjoyership). Thus, declared Lord Krishna, Those whose ignorance is destroyed by the knowledge of the Self-that realisation of theirs, like the Sun, reveals the Supreme. When this "non-apprehension". which is the expression of ignorance, ends in the direct apprehension of the Self, the experience of the transcendental reveals the full nature of the new state of Consciousness-the Ultimate Reality, the Spiritual Truth, the Self in us, which is the Self in All

In these three verses then the Geetaacharya clearly indicates how the Infinite Self, by Its mere Presence alone, lends life to all the insentient matter-vestures in us. And it is we, in our indis- crimination-driven by our Vasanas-anx-





The Art of Man Making

ious to enjoy in our arrogant ego-come to act wrongly and suffer the tragic consequences. To assume a Lord, Ishwara, who is responsible for all our activities is a Sadhana-an effective spiritual practice to liquidate our ego and sense of individuality. The attitude of doership in us can be easily surrendered at the altar of the Lord of all Actions-the Lord of the Universe: the Jagadeeshwara.

We hear our friends sometimes despairing, but often proudly justifying their sinful acts of excesses as they are all "God-prompted". No driver has saved himself from punishment for the accident committed by him, by arguing the incontrovertible fact that "but for the petrol in the car, the accident would not have happened!" True. But petrol gave the car only a blind onward push.

It is for the intelligent driver to control the





The Art of Man Making

front wheels and steer clear the car on the road without harming other members of the community. Similarly the Self lends Its Light and Life to the personality layers it is for the mental intellectual man in us to think rightly, judge correctly, guide his sense-organs, and ride along - a noble righteous life of usefulness to all others.

But this is defeated in us by our own inadvertence-born of our "non-apprehension" of the true meaning, purpose and goal of life - Knowledge shrouded by our ignorance - hence creatures delude themselves.

The vivid and gross expressions of this dire "ignorance" in us are witnessed in our sense of doership and enjoyership. To rise above them both is to go beyond "ignorance" into the brilliant and blissful state of





The Art of Man Making

utter fulfilment and joy- the State of Wisdom-the Selfhood. The Life given to us is not to be squandered away in seeking pleasures and discovering here and there some sense-gratifications.

Acquiring and aggrandising for selfish purposes is the animal's efforts, not of a cultured man's civilized vocation. To see ourselves in others, to recognise in all others our own essential Self, to perceive the One Life Divine that expresses everywhere through all as the variegated dynamic world, and to spend our energies in the service of this Total Glory-the Lord of the Universe (Ishwara)-is true living of a productive and satisfactory spiritual life.

Let our religion bring through us light and joy into the world around us. While thus serving the world, let us not allow our ego





The Art of Man Making

and selfishness to disturb the melody of His Song sung through us.

Let us learn to feel the floods of joy gushing through us - the serenade of His tuneful play cascading through us. To be alert to watch and perceive His dance within and around us is to live on a higher plane of Spiritual Awareness.



Jivanmukta

Wandering In Himalayas

112

Lake Manas And Mt. Kailas

Excerpts from the Travel Memoirs of
Param Poojya
Swami Tapovanji Maharaj



JIVANMUKTA

Freezing Cold and Curious Highwaymen

My health was fast declining, but as Lake Manasa and Mt. Kailas were nearby, I moved forward like a boy in merry expectation of new sights awaiting me. When I had walked seven or eight miles leaving some pretty little villages behind, I reached a famous marketplace in Western Tibet called Taklakote.





Jivannukta

On one bank of the Karnali River stands Taklakote; on the other side is Poorana-mandi.

At Poorana-mandi we rested two or three days as the guests of a Nepali official. Rice, wheat, and other foodstuffs were on sale there, and were also available to us free of cost; yet I could not eat and recoup my health because fever continued to harass me. Fortunately Lake Manasawas only 25 miles away. Encouraged by the shortness of distance, we set out early one morning in the direction of the lake. Near Taklakote we came across two or three villages and a few farms by the wayside. In the villages of Tibet and the Himalayan valleys the women work more tirelessly than the men. It requires hard labour to eke out a living in this unfertile region. Thus you can





Jivannukta

hardly find anyone rolling in luxury. Laziness is ruinous to those caught in its web. Those who refuse to work are breakers of the Divine Law.

Having travelled all day along beautiful plains, we reached at nightfall a notorious spot called Gouri Oddar (Gouri's Cave), dreaded by merchants and pilgrims as the haunt of highwaymen. But what could robbers do to us? Why should they attack poor mendicants who carried no valuables, money, or fine clothes? Once or twice they approached us and examined our packages with curiosity, but finding nothing they wanted, instead of molesting us they supplied us with some food. They told me of the shortest route to Kailas and of places where we might rest at night. By the grace of the Lord of





Jivannukta

Kailas, even highwaymen turned out to be helpers and not oppressors.

On an open plateau of Tibet, 16,000 feet high, Anandagiri and I sat in the freezing cold at night battling with biting cold blasts. Rain and sleet seemed imminent. Intermittently sitting up and lying down, we somehow passed the night. At dawn we got up and, without paying heed to the intense cold, moved slowly along the valley below the snow-covered peaks.

Tibet is a land of misery; yet the sights there are so extraordinary that they make people forget the misery in no time. The Tibet I saw was altogether barren, without a touch of greenery anywhere. The fuel used in Tibetan villages is a kind of shrub which burns green and is brought from far-off places. The plateau is one vast stretch of land-cold, bare,





Jivannukta

solitary, tranquil. The glaciers, big and small, and rows of mountains covered with snow glitter like gold or silver and help to raise the spectator's mind to a plane of Divine magnificence is a panoramic picture of peace with no scope for excitement. Perhaps that was why the wise men of yore called it "Trivishatpabhoomi" (Land of the Gods). Scholars say that the word "Tibet" is a corruption of "Trivishatapa." I may say from personal experience that the environs of Mt. Kailas are such as to liberate one's mind immediately from mundane cares and raise to a wonderful, painless, sorrowless world fit for the Gods.





STORY

Section



DURVASA MUNI & DRAUPADI



Once Durvasa Muni visited the house of Duryodhana, the enemy cousin of Maharaja Yudishtra.

Duryodhana was intelligent enough to satisfy the brahmana by all means, and the great rishi wanted to give some benediction to Duryodhana.

Duryodhana knew his mystic powers, and he knew also that the mystic brahmana, if dissatisfied, could cause some havoc, and thus he designed to engage the





Durvasa Muni & Draupadi

brahmana to show his wrath upon his enemy cousins, the Pandavas.

When the rishi wanted to award some benediction to Duryodhana, the latter wished that he should visit the house of Maharaja Yudishtra, who was the eldest and chief among all his cousins.

But by his request he would go to him after he had finished his meals with his Queen, Draupadi.

Duryodhana knew that after Draupadi's dinner it would be impossible for Maharaja Yudishtra to receive such a large number of brahmana guests, and thus the rishi would be annoyed and would create some trouble for his cousin Maharaja Yudishtra. That was the plan of Duryodhana.

Durvasa Muni agreed to this proposal, and he approached the King in exile, according to the plan of





Durvasa Muni & Draupadi

Duryodhana, after the King and Draupadi had finished their meals.

On his arrival at the door of Maharaja Yudishtra, he was at once well received, and the King requested him to finish his noon-time religious rites in the river, for by that time the foodstuff would be prepared.

Durvasa Muni, along with his large number of disciples, went to take a bath in the river, and Maharaja Yudishtra was in great anxiety about the guests.

As long as Draupadi had not taken her meals, food could be served to any number of guests, but the rishi, by the plan of Duryodhana, reached there after Draupadi had finished her meals.

When the devotees are put into difficulty, they have an opportunity to recollect the Lord with rapt attention. So Draupadi was thinking of Lord Krishna in that dangerous position and the all-pervading Lord could at once know the dangerous position of





Durvasa Muni & Draupadi

His devotees.

He therefore came there on the scene and asked Draupadi to give whatever food she might have in her stock.

On her being so requested by the Lord, Draupadi was sorrowful because the Supreme Lord asked her for some food and she was unable to supply it at that time.

She said to the Lord that the mysterious dish which she had received from the sun-god could supply any amount of food if she herself had not eaten. But on that day she had already taken her meals, and thus they were in danger. By expressing her difficulties she began to cry before the Lord as only a woman would do in such a position.

The Lord, however, asked Draupadi to bring up the cooking pots to see if there was any particle of foodstuff left, and on Draupadi doing so, the Lord found one





Durvasa Muni & Draupadi

grain of rice sticking to the pot.

The Lord at once picked it up and ate it. After doing so, the Lord asked Draupadi to call for her guests, the company of Durvasa.

Bhima was sent to call them from the river. Bhima said, "Why are you delaying, sirs? Come on, the food is ready for you."

But the brahmanas, because of Lord Krishna's accepting just one grain of rice, felt sumptuously fed, even while they were in the water.

They thought that since Maharajja Yudishtra must have prepared many valuable dishes for them and since they were not hungry and could not eat, the King would feel very sorry, so it was better not to go there. Thus they decided to go away.





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Bringing Love & Light
in the lives of all with the
Knowledge of Self



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Evening Aarti at Ashram





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Birth is being Vyakta





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Know the Avyakta too





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Devotees galore





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Lighting of the lamp

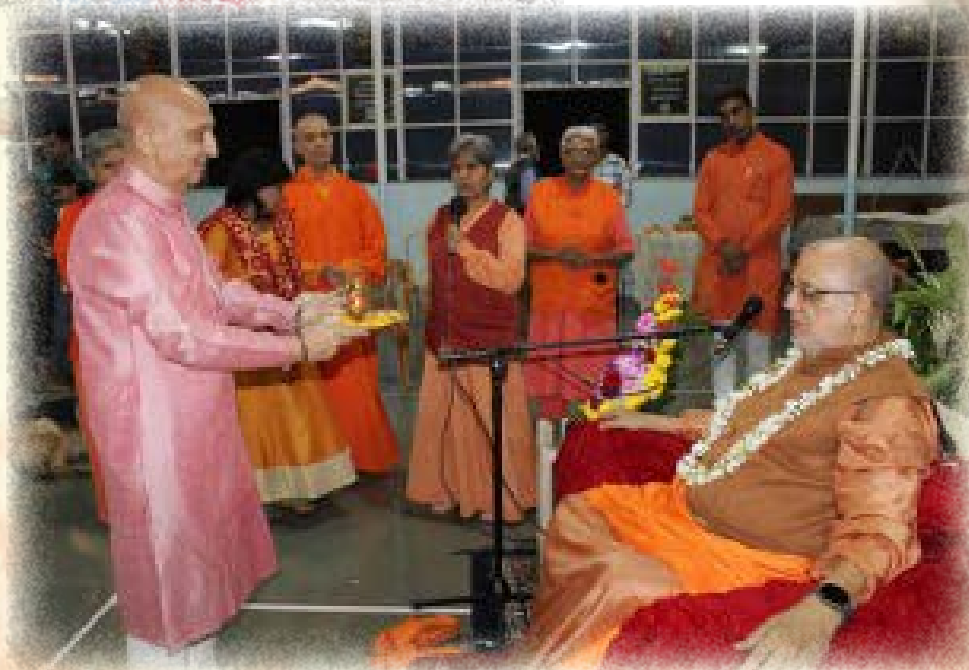




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Glorious Gokuldham Mandir



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